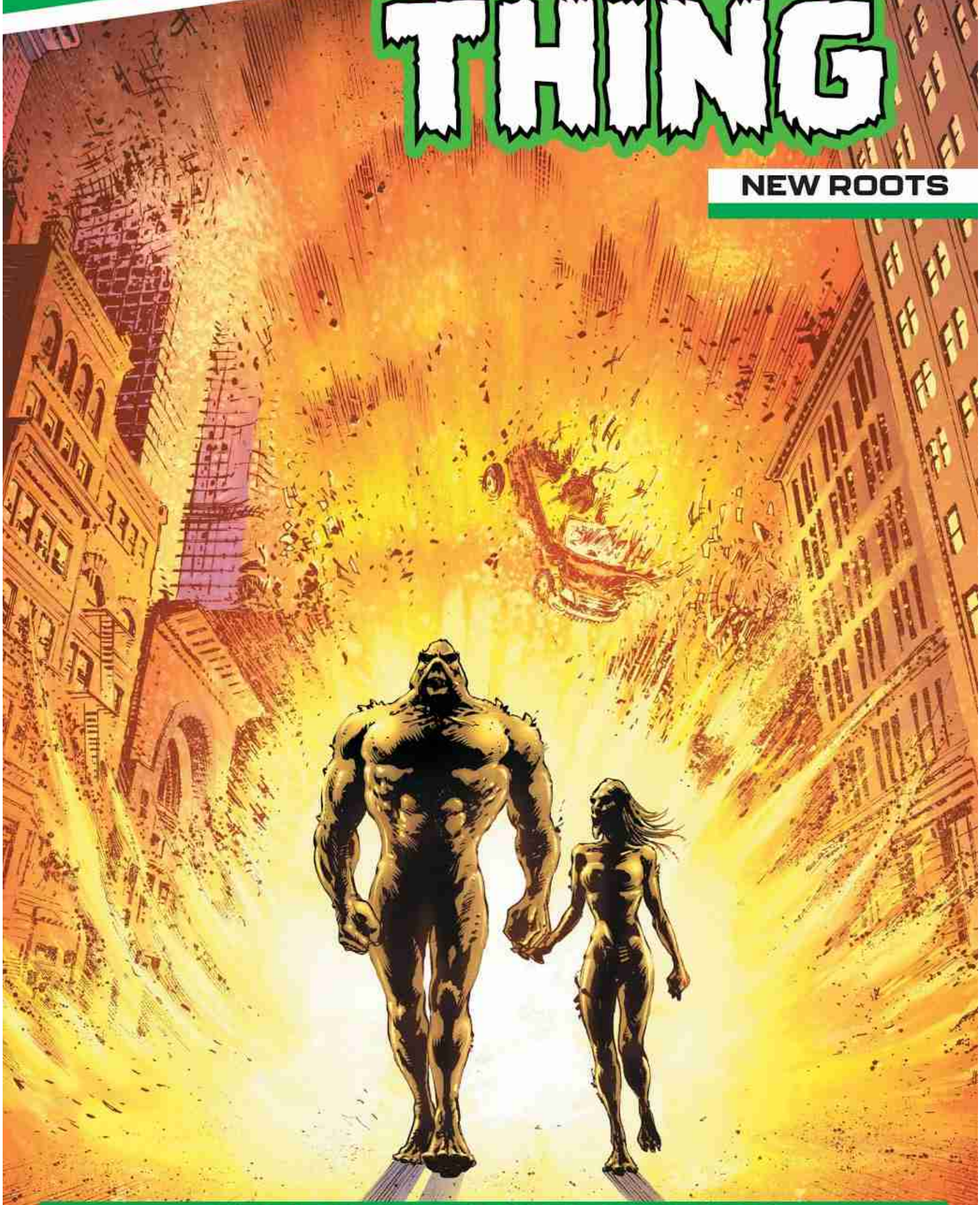
DC DIGITAL FIRST

SWAMP THING

NEW ROOTS



SEEDS OF DESTRUCTION

RUSSELL - SANTUCCI - KALISZ

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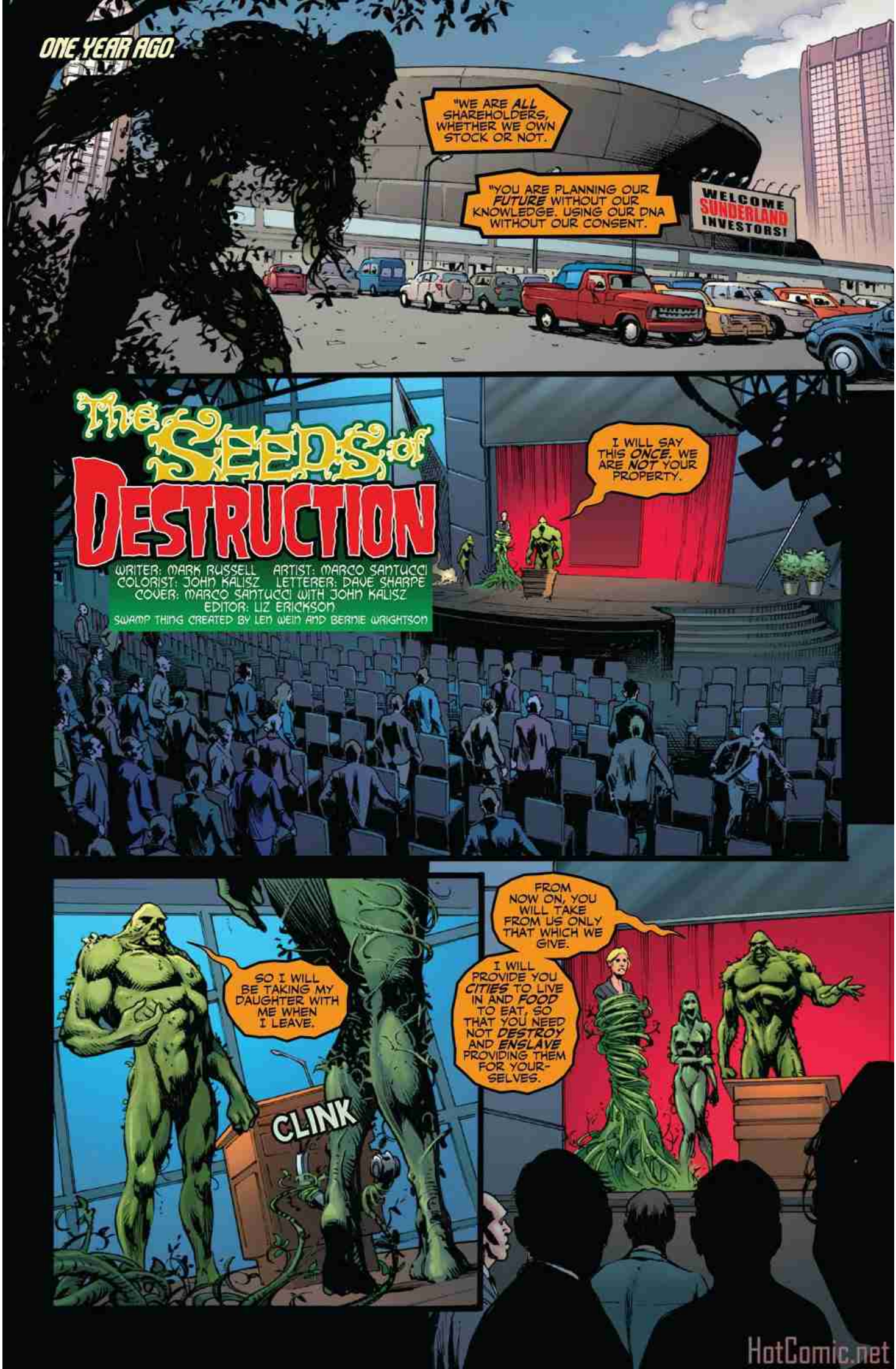
ONE YEAR AGO.
"WE ARE ALL SHAREHOLDERS, WHETHER WE OWN STOCK OR NOT.
"YOU ARE PLANNING OUR FUTURE WITHOUT OUR KNOWLEDGE. USING OUR DNA WITHOUT OUR CONSENT.
WELCOME SUNDERLAND INVESTORS!
The SEEDS of DESTRUCTION
WRITER: MARK RUSSELL ARTIST: MARCO SANTUCCI
COLORIST: JOHN KALISZ LETTERER: DAVE SHARPE
COVER: MARCO SANTUCCI WITH JOHN KALISZ
EDITOR: LIZ ERICKSON
SWAMP THING CREATED BY LEN WEIN AND BERNIE WRIGHTSON
I WILL SAY THIS ONCE. WE ARE NOT YOUR PROPERTY.
SO I WILL BE TAKING MY DAUGHTER WITH ME WHEN I LEAVE.
CLINK
FROM NOW ON, YOU WILL TAKE FROM US ONLY THAT WHICH WE GIVE.
I WILL PROVIDE YOU CITIES TO LIVE IN AND FOOD TO EAT, SO THAT YOU NEED NOT DESTROY AND ENSLAVE PROVIDING THEM FOR YOURSELVES.

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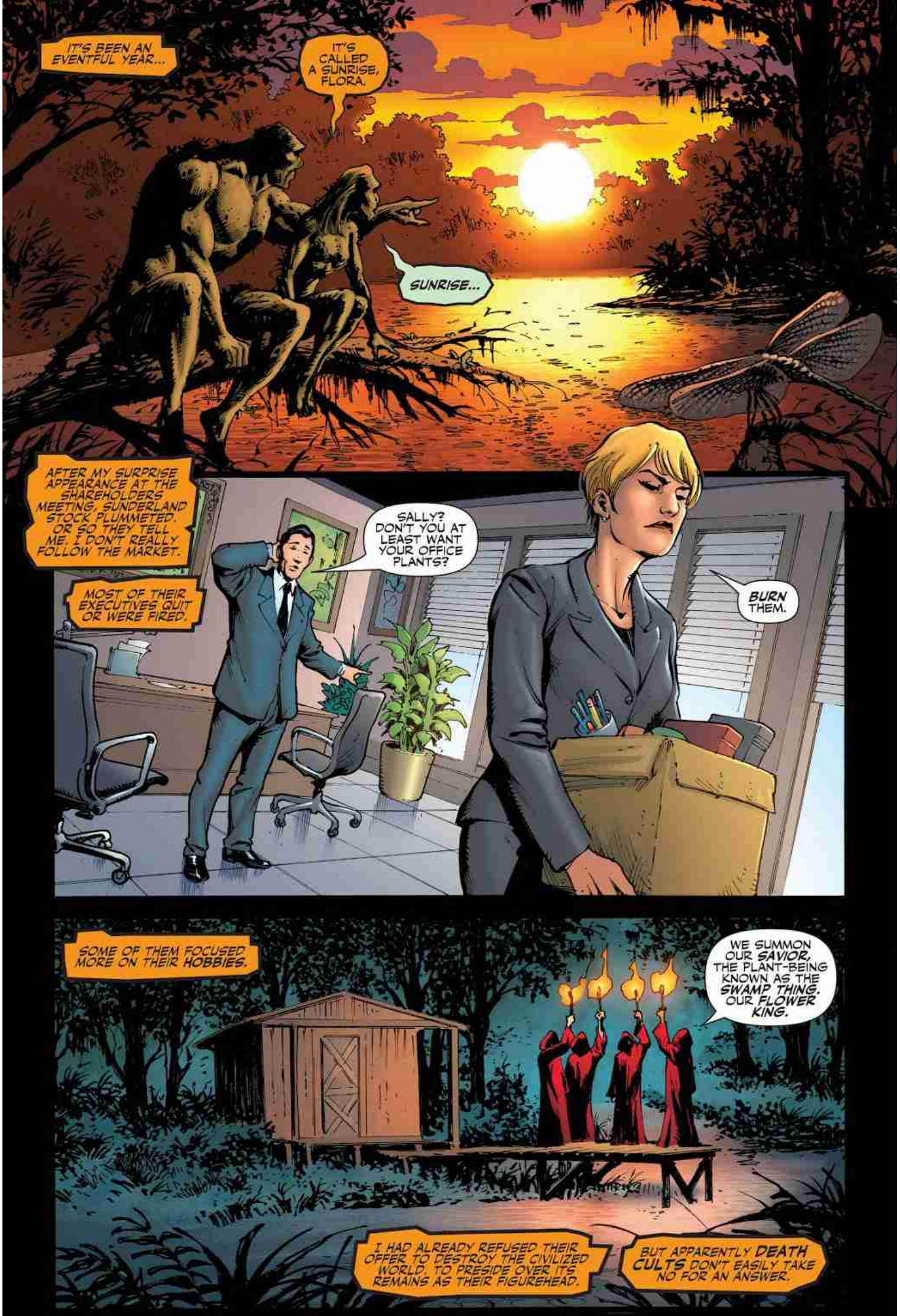
IT'S BEEN AN EVENTFUL YEAR...
IT'S CALLED A SUNRISE, FLORA.
SUNRISE...
AFTER MY SURPRISE APPEARANCE AT THE SHAREHOLDERS MEETING, SUNDERLAND STOCK PLUMMETED. OR SO THEY TELL ME. I DON'T REALLY FOLLOW THE MARKET.
MOST OF THEIR EXECUTIVES QUIT OR WERE FIRED.
SALLY? DON'T YOU AT LEAST WANT YOUR OFFICE PLANTS?
BURN THEM.
SOME OF THEM FOCUSED MORE ON THEIR HOBBIES.
WE SUMMON OUR SAVIOR, THE PLANT-BEING KNOWN AS THE SWAMP THING. OUR FLOWER KING.
I HAD ALREADY REFUSED THEIR OFFER TO DESTROY THE CIVILIZED WORLD, TO PRESIDE OVER ITS REMAINS AS THEIR FIGUREHEAD.
BUT APPARENTLY DEATH CULTS DON'T EASILY TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER.

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BUT THEY ARE AS MURDEROUS AND DESTRUCTIVE AS THE ORDER THEY SEEK TO REPLACE.
YOU CANNOT TRULY BUILD A NEW WORLD UNLESS YOU CAN RESIST THE URGE TO RULE IT.
WE'RE HERE TO ASK YOU TO RECONSIDER YOUR DECISION, MY FLOWER KING. SAY THE WORD AND WE WILL BUILD A NEW WORLD FROM THE ASHES OF THE OLD.
SURELY, AFTER WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN... AFTER WHAT THEY HAVE DONE... YOU MUST KNOW THAT THERE IS NO OTHER WAY. WE MUST DESTROY ALL OF THIS AND START OVER.
I WILL BUILD A NEW WORLD. BUT I WILL BUILD IT WITH THOSE WHO MUST LIVE IN IT. A WORLD IN WHICH HUMANS AND THE GREEN MIGHT BOTH SURVIVE.
NO, NOT BEING A PLANT...
BEING A PLANT HAS MADE YOU SOFT!
BEING A FATHER.
NOW GO.
HE WON'T SEE REASON.
SO IT LOOKS AS THOUGH WE WILL BE DOING THIS YOUR WAY, THOMAS.
IT WAS ALWAYS COMING TO THIS. WE BOTH KNEW IT WOULD.
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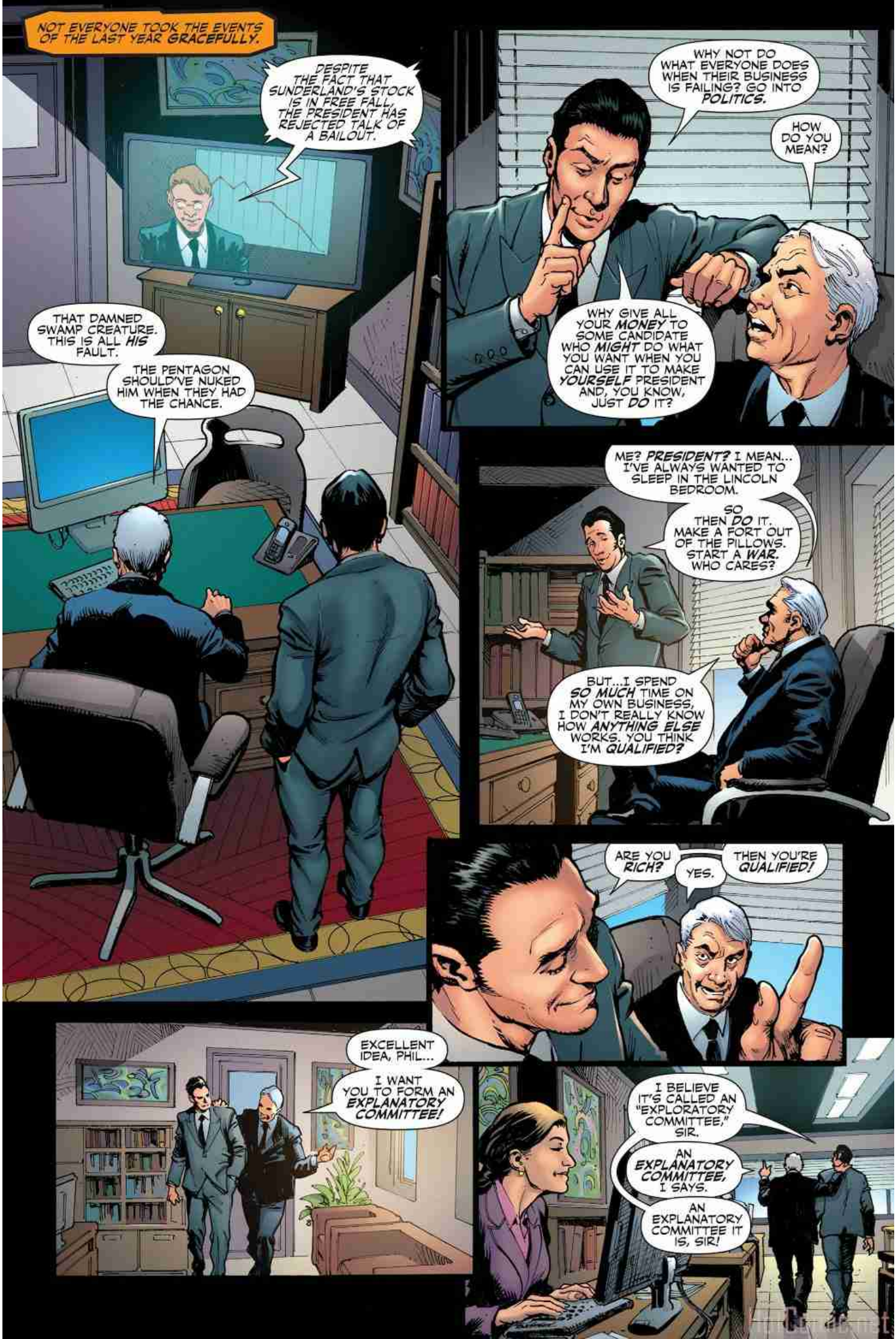
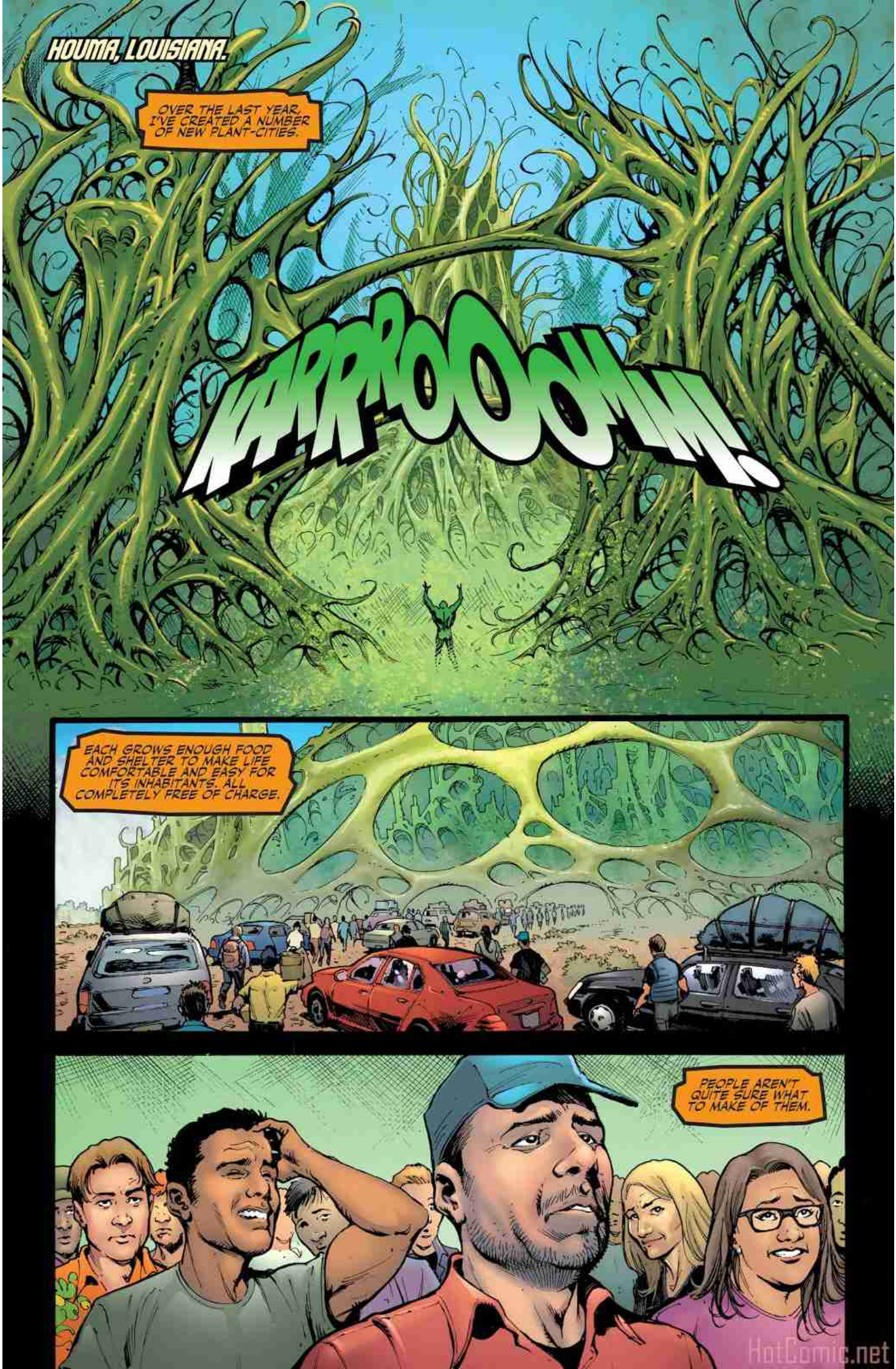

NOT EVERYONE TOOK THE EVENTS OF THE LAST YEAR GRACEFULLY.
DESPITE THE FACT THAT SUNDERLAND'S STOCK IS IN FREE FALL, THE PRESIDENT HAS REJECTED TALK OF A BAILOUT.
THAT DAMNED SWAMP CREATURE. THIS IS ALL HIS FAULT.
THE PENTAGON SHOULD'VE NUKED HIM WHEN THEY HAD THE CHANCE.
WHY NOT DO WHAT EVERYONE DOES WHEN THEIR BUSINESS IS FAILING? GO INTO POLITICS.
HOW DO YOU MEAN?
WHY GIVE ALL YOUR MONEY TO SOME CANDIDATE WHO MIGHT DO WHAT YOU WANT WHEN YOU CAN USE IT TO MAKE YOURSELF PRESIDENT AND, YOU KNOW, JUST DO IT?
ME? PRESIDENT? I MEAN... I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SLEEP IN THE LINCOLN BEDROOM.
SO THEN DO IT. MAKE A FORT OUT OF THE PILLOWS. START A WAR. WHO CARES?
BUT...I SPEND SO MUCH TIME ON MY OWN BUSINESS, I DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW ANYTHING ELSE WORKS. YOU THINK I'M QUALIFIED?
ARE YOU RICH?
YES.
THEN YOU'RE QUALIFIED!
EXCELLENT IDEA, PHIL...
I WANT YOU TO FORM AN EXPLANATORY COMMITTEE!
I BELIEVE IT'S CALLED AN "EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE," SIR.
AN EXPLANATORY COMMITTEE, I SAYS.
AN EXPLANATORY COMMITTEE IT IS, SIR!


HOUMA, LOUISIANA.
OVER THE LAST YEAR, I'VE CREATED A NUMBER OF NEW PLANT-CITIES.
KARROOOM.
EACH GROWS ENOUGH FOOD AND SHELTER TO MAKE LIFE COMFORTABLE AND EASY FOR ITS INHABITANTS. ALL COMPLETELY FREE OF CHARGE.
PEOPLE AREN'T QUITE SURE WHAT TO MAKE OF THEM.
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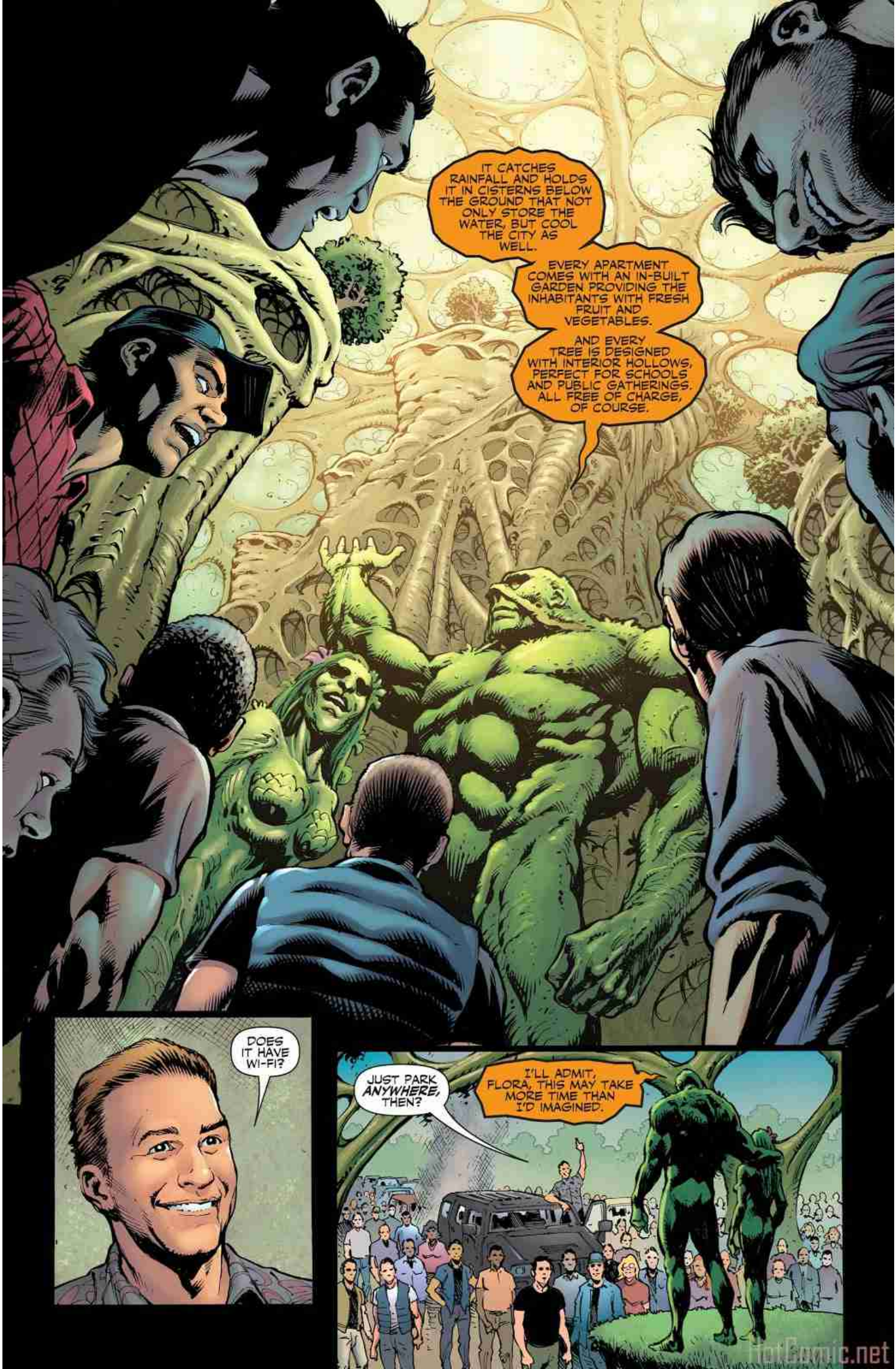
IT CATCHES RAINFALL AND HOLDS IT IN CISTERNS BELOW THE GROUND THAT NOT ONLY STORE THE WATER, BUT COOL THE CITY AS WELL.
EVERY APARTMENT COMES WITH AN IN-BUILT GARDEN PROVIDING THE INHABITANTS WITH FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.
AND EVERY TREE IS DESIGNED WITH INTERIOR HOLLOWS, PERFECT FOR SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC GATHERINGS. ALL FREE OF CHARGE, OF COURSE.
DOES IT HAVE WI-FI?
JUST PARK *ANYWHERE*, THEN?
I'LL ADMIT, FLORA, THIS MAY TAKE MORE TIME THAN I'D IMAGINED.
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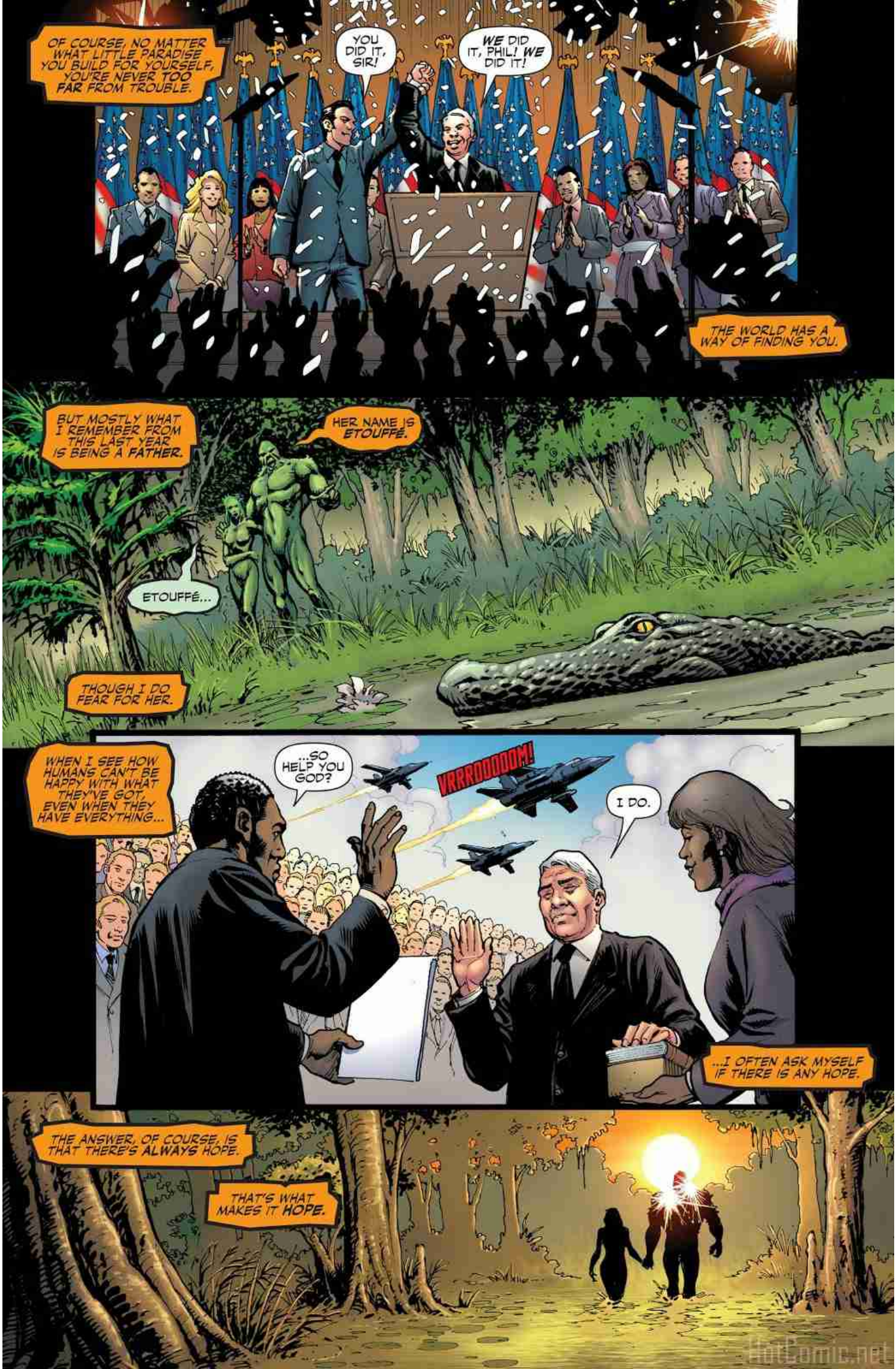
OF COURSE, NO MATTER WHAT LITTLE PARADISE YOU BUILD FOR YOURSELF, YOU'RE NEVER TOO FAR FROM TROUBLE.
YOU DID IT, SIR!
WE DID IT, PHIL! WE DID IT!
THE WORLD HAS A WAY OF FINDING YOU.
BUT MOSTLY WHAT I REMEMBER FROM THIS LAST YEAR IS BEING A FATHER.
HER NAME IS ETOUFFÉ.
ETOUFFÉ...
THOUGH I DO FEAR FOR HER.
WHEN I SEE HOW HUMANS CAN'T BE HAPPY WITH WHAT THEY'VE GOT, EVEN WHEN THEY HAVE EVERYTHING...
...SO HELP YOU GOD?
VRRROOOOM!
I DO.
...I OFTEN ASK MYSELF IF THERE IS ANY HOPE.
THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS THAT THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE.
THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT HOPE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT... THE LINCOLN BEDROOM!
AND I OWE IT ALL TO MY PERSONAL ASSISTANT!
ACTUALLY, I'M THE ATTORNEY GENERAL NOW, SIR.
OF COURSE YOU ARE!
MR. SUNDER-- MR. PRESIDENT, I WANT TO INTRODUCE SERGEANT THOMAS CAIN. HE'S IN CHARGE OF THE NUCLEAR FOOTBALL.
THE WHAT-WHAT?
THIS BRIEFCASE ALLOWS YOU TO RAIN THERMO-NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION ON ANYONE YOU SEE FIT, SIR.
EXCELLENT! STAY CLOSE, SON. I GOT A FEELING I'M GOING TO NEED YOU SOON.

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THESE PLANTS CAN SPIN FIBER INTO CLOTHES, RIGHT OFF THE VINE.
OVERALLS, HUH?
OF COURSE, WE CAN GROW THEM IN ANY *STYLE* YOU WANT.
I'M AFRAID I'M NOT MUCH OF A FASHION DESIGNER.
BUT FLORA LIKES THEM.
WOW, THIS COTTON REALLY *BREATHES.*
WE HAVE FREE CLASSES FOR ALL AGES. EVEN ADULTS.
WHETHER IT'S A COMMUNITY OR A STRAND OF DNA, NOTHING IS TRULY ALIVE UNTIL IT PASSES ON ITS INFORMATION.
WHO CAN TELL ME THE MAJOR BRANCHES IN THE *TREE OF LIFE?*

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IT'S HAPPENING, BROTHER.
I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE THE HONOR.
CLICK
WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?
YOU'D BETTER COME WITH US, SIR.
ALL THIS FOR A TACTICAL STRIKE?
THIS WAY, SIR.
BOY, I'M THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES! YOU BEST ANSWER ME!
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

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IN THE CONTEST BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, DEATH ALWAYS HAS AN EDGE. FOR IT IS EASIER TO DESTROY THAN TO CREATE.
WE'RE DOOMED!
BUT EVEN IN THE MUSTY COFFINS OF THEIR MISSILE SILOS, THERE IS LIFE. TINY GRANULES OF DUST AND MOSS THAT PERMEATE EVEN THE TIGHTEST SARCOPHAGUS.
VRRRRRRR!
IF I CAN JUST REACH THEM... PERHAPS...
...THEN MAYBE, THIS ONCE, LIFE CAN DEFEAT DEATH.
EVERYTHING I AM.
GOODBYE, FLORA.
FATHER?
BUT IT WILL TAKE EVERYTHING I HAVE.
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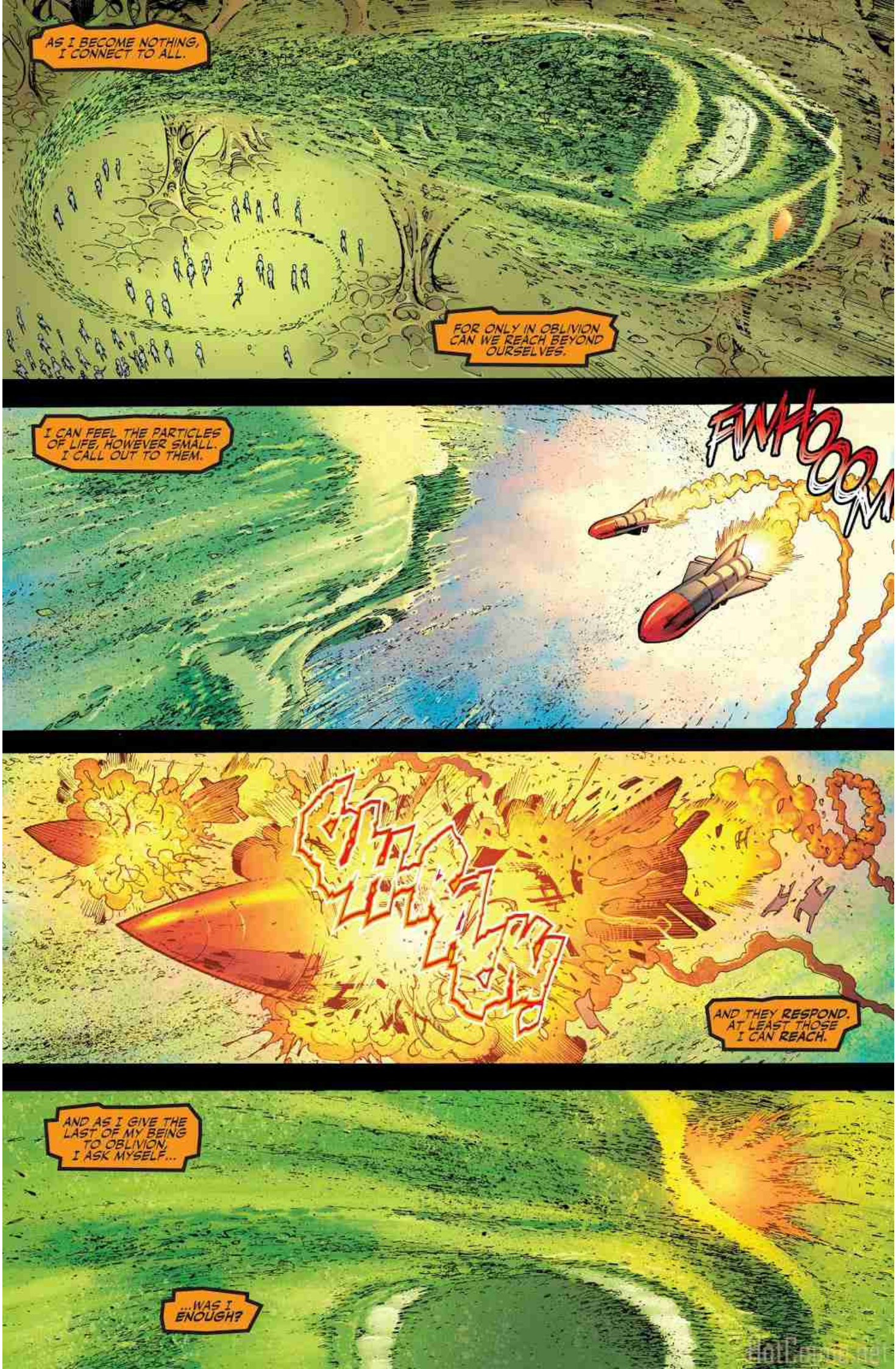
AS I BECOME NOTHING, I CONNECT TO ALL.
FOR ONLY IN OBLIVION CAN WE REACH BEYOND OURSELVES.
I CAN FEEL THE PARTICLES OF LIFE, HOWEVER SMALL. I CALL OUT TO THEM.
FWHOOM
AND THEY RESPOND. AT LEAST THOSE I CAN REACH.
AND AS I GIVE THE LAST OF MY BEING TO OBLIVION, I ASK MYSELF...
...WAS I ENOUGH?

BY NOW, ALL THE MISSILES WILL HAVE REACHED THEIR TARGETS. THE WORLD WE KNEW IS *NO MORE.*
WE *DID* IT!
WHAT DID *YOU* DO?
IT'S WHAT *WE* DID, SIR. WHAT *WE* DID.

TWENTY YEARS LATER.

BY NOW, THE NUCLEAR FOG SHOULD HAVE LIFTED. WE'RE GOING TO CHECK ON THE SURFACE. WANT TO COME WITH?
I'M CONTENT WITH *THIS* VERSION OF PURGATORY, THANKS.

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ALL THOSE DEAD BILLIONS. THE FLOWER KING DESTROYED...
WE WILL BUILD A NEW WORLD ON THE ASHES OF THE OLD. ONE WORTHY OF OUR FAITH...
IN A WAY OUR GOD NEVER WAS.
FOR WHAT IS A GOD BUT THE CONVICTION OF HIS FOLLOWERS?
HUH?
HOW?!
IF YOU LOOK OUT ONTO THE SOUTH LAWN, YOU'LL SEE... UH...
IT RARELY WORKS IN LIFE TO BURY YOUR PROBLEMS. BUT SOMETIMES, IF YOU'RE LUCKY, THEY BURY THEMSELVES.
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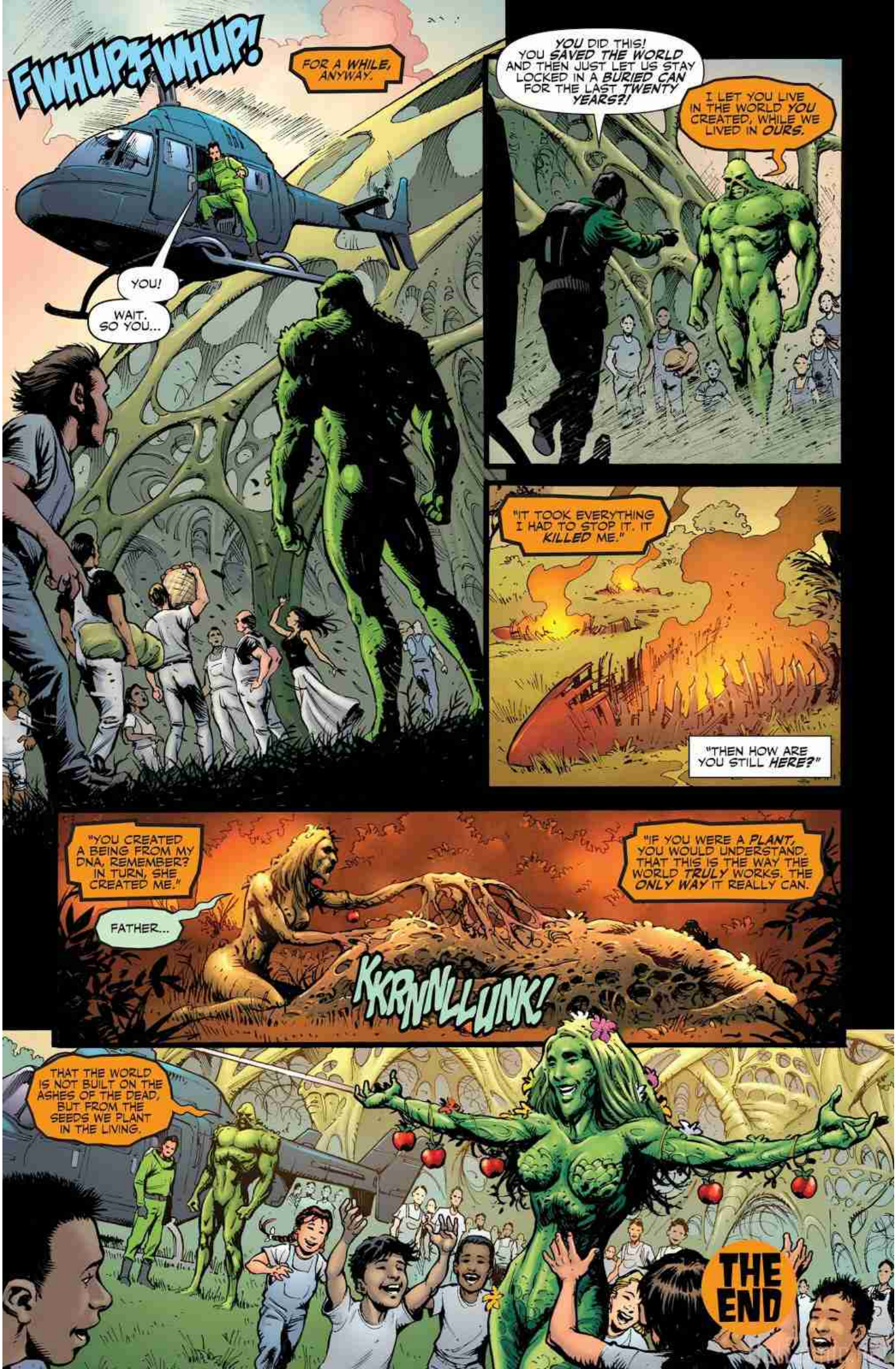
FWHUP-FWHUP!
FOR A WHILE, ANYWAY.
YOU!
WAIT. SO YOU...
YOU DID THIS! YOU SAVED THE WORLD AND THEN JUST LET US STAY LOCKED IN A BURIED CAN FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS?!
I LET YOU LIVE IN THE WORLD YOU CREATED, WHILE WE LIVED IN OURS.
"IT TOOK EVERYTHING I HAD TO STOP IT. IT KILLED ME."
"THEN HOW ARE YOU STILL HERE?"
"YOU CREATED A BEING FROM MY DNA, REMEMBER? IN TURN, SHE CREATED ME."
FATHER...
KKRNNLLUNK!
"IF YOU WERE A PLANT, YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND. THAT THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD TRULY WORKS. THE ONLY WAY IT REALLY CAN.
THAT THE WORLD IS NOT BUILT ON THE ASHES OF THE DEAD, BUT FROM THE SEEDS WE PLANT IN THE LIVING.
THE END

SON OF ULTRON